



## Accessing Home and Community-Based Care

FEATURE ARTICLE

### Long-Term Living in Your Home and Community

As 71-year-old Donna regained her ability to walk and help care for herself after her stroke, she insisted to the nursing home staff that she be able to return to her home and family in Burlington, North Carolina. There she could devote attention to her much neglected garden and attend her granddaughter's soccer games, which she anxiously missed.

"My granddaughter, Ashley, is involved in activities year round, but I really like going to her soccer games. She is the star of her team," Donna says proudly.

Doctors and medical social workers urged Donna to stay in the nursing home longer, or at least to move into assisted living. But the 71-year-old senior was resolute and stood her ground.

Donna contacted the local Area Agency on Aging because she had heard that community services were available to help her. She was right. The Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for services that support seniors in every community across the nation. The Area Agency conducted an assessment, helped to arrange home care and transportation to physical therapy, and even had wheelchair ramps installed. Donna had an excellent recovery and today enjoys the distinction of having the prettiest garden on her street. She is also the first one out of her seat and loudest fan cheering whenever Ashley scores a goal.

For nearly 40 years, the Older Americans Act has made it possible for seniors like Donna to access care in the comfort of their homes or communities. Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging (AoA), the Older Americans Act provides the opportunity for adults to age with dignity and remain independent and productive for as long as possible.

"The Administration on Aging works with Federal, state, and local partners to implement a broad array of services for aging Americans," says Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging in the U.S. Department Health and Human Services. "Our priority is to provide innovative long-term care options that respond to the needs and preferences of older people and their loved ones."

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Older Americans Act services and providers help more than 8 million aging adults and provide critical assistance in giving the ever-increasing older population choices in managing their own lives. Several AoA resources have been developed to help older Americans and the people who care for them access home and community-based care with confidence and ease.

## **National Aging Services Network (The Aging Network)**

The National Aging Services Network is a system of State Agencies on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and Tribal and Native organizations that plan, coordinate, and provide home and community-based services and elder rights programs.

The Aging Network implements Older Americans Act programs and operates as a portal to long-term care services, including information and assistance, adult day care, elder abuse prevention, and respite care. In addition, the Aging Network can help coordinate supportive services such as transportation to medical appointments, homemaker assistance, and personal care.

Older adults can also access preventive health and nutrition programs through the Aging Network. These programs help individuals lead healthier lives, provide home-delivered and congregate meals that improve dietary intake, and offer important social outlets for seniors.

## **Eldercare Locator**

The Eldercare Locator is a nationwide toll-free directory assistance service and Web site that links older Americans and their caregivers to services provided through the National Aging Services Network. Established in 1991, the Eldercare Locator is designed to help older adults and their caregivers navigate their way through the maze of available senior services, and identify trustworthy local support resources.

## **Aging and Disability Resource Centers**

The Aging and Disability Resource Center program is a cooperative effort of the AoA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to create "one-stop" centers for persons seeking multiple components of long-term support. The vision is to have Resource Centers in every community serving as highly visible and trusted places where people can turn for information on the full range of long-term support options.

With the coming retirement of millions of baby boomers, the demand for long-term care is expected to more than double by 2030. The AoA is leading the way to improving the quality of life for all older Americans and ensuring that homes and communities are good places to grow old.

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As the nation celebrates Older Americans Month in May, you can learn more about home-and-community-based care and other topics by visiting [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov). The theme of Older Americans Month—"Celebrate Long-Term Living!"—highlights the goal of organizations throughout the Aging Network to help older Americans stay healthy and active longer. For information about local resources, contact the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

